

The Mcfaddens

This is a story created by Robyn Rudd, it's based around a working class family in East London back in the 90s.

A Glaswegian strong steel worker farther and husband who works finishes off in the working man's club and rules his family with a old fashioned iron rod yet family dynamics and arguments born from jealousy alcohol infused and family members with maybe his strong will makes it difficult for him to control perhaps how he wants

A hard working family with little money or material wealth but a almost envious family connection of love just a different way of expressing it

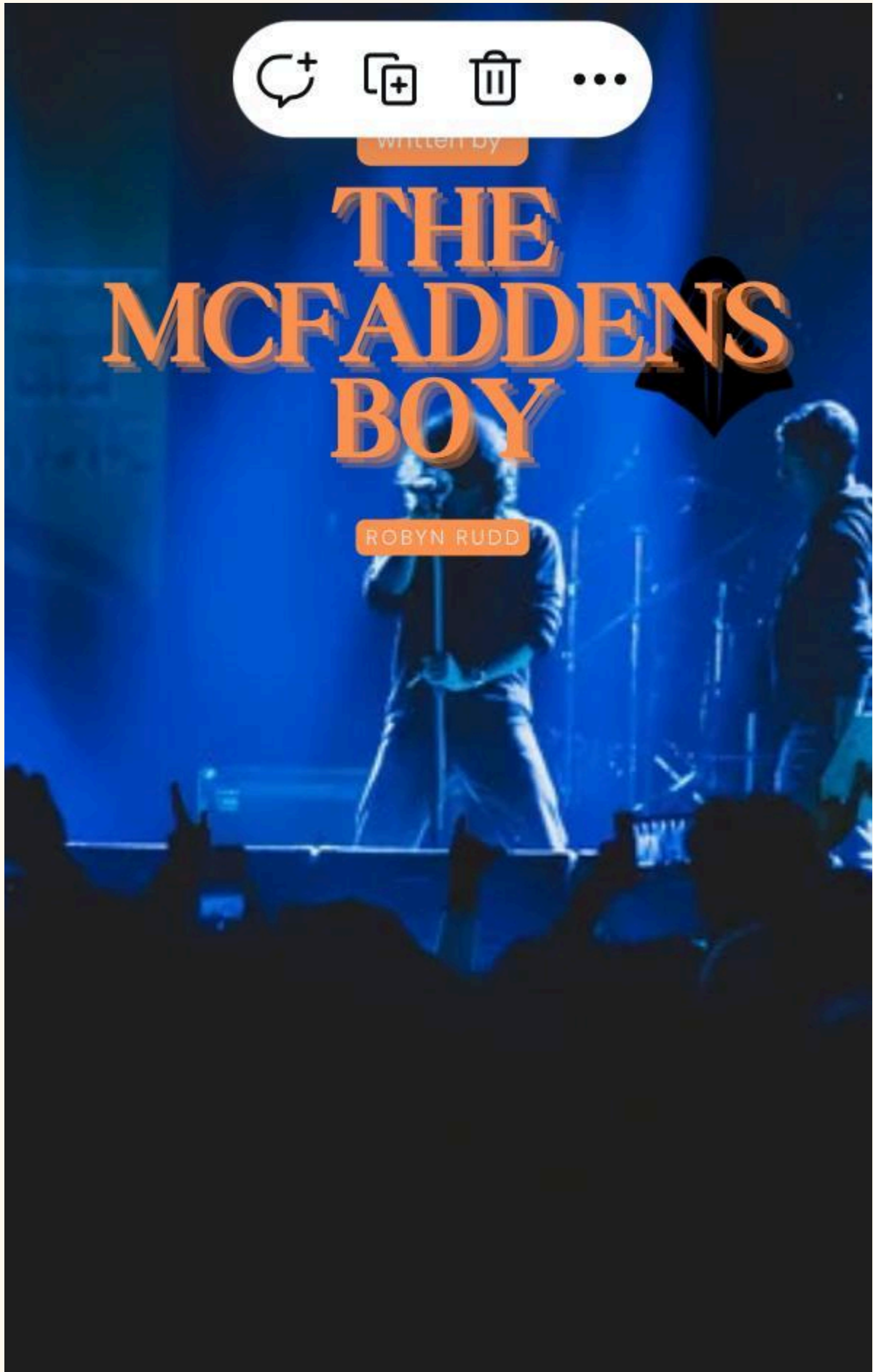
With Billy the baby introvert of the family of mum Betty dad Angus and siblings Benji and Angel yet Billy has a undiscovered voice or maybe something he hid until a opportunity arises and how the journey takes the family into a different world for better and worse



written by

THE MCFADDENS BOY

ROBYN RUDD



By Robyn Rudd

Chapter One

The sun hadn't shown its face yet over the grey brick of the estate, but the day was already moving. A milk float rattled at the far end of the row, bottles clinking like a tune only morning workers knew.

Inside Number 23, the Glaswegian voice of Angus boomed from the kitchen.

"Benji! Shift yersel', the milkman won't wait all day!"

Benji thumped down the stairs, still pulling on his trainers. Big, broad for his sixteen years, his shirt half-untucked, he shoved the hood of his bomber jacket over his head. "I'm goin', Dad. Chill out."

"Don't tell me tae chill," Angus snapped, his heavy frame planted at the kitchen table, hands wrapped around a chipped mug of strong tea. He'd already been up an hour, ready for another day at the steel factory. His eyes, sharp under thick brows, followed his son until the door slammed.

Upstairs, Angel sat cross-legged on her bed, rollers tugging at her scalp, pen scratching across a revision book. Betty leaned in the doorway, hair tied back, apron already dusted with yesterday's flour from the chip shop.

"You're workin' too hard, love. You'll do fine."

Angel looked up, lips curled in a half-smile. "I've got to, Mum. Don't wanna end up behind that fryer with you."

Betty chuckled, proud more than offended. "Oi, cheeky cow. That fryer paid for them shoes on your feet." She blew her daughter a kiss before stomping off to check on Billy.

Billy was in the corner of the bedroom he shared with Benji, knees pulled to his chest, hood up though the room was warm. Ear pressed to a battered cassette player, he hummed along so quietly only the wallpaper could hear. The tape hissed between tracks, some old soul song borrowed from the music teacher.

“Billy!” Betty’s voice softened when she saw him. “You’ll make yourself invisible one of these days. Breakfast’s ready.”

He pulled the hood lower, mumbling, “Not hungry.”

From downstairs, Angus roared again: “He bloody is hungry, get him down here!”

Betty sighed. She reached over, pressed pause on the cassette. “Come on, love. You don’t want your dad stormin’ up here.”

Reluctantly, Billy shuffled to his feet. He liked the music, the way it made him feel taller inside, but he knew better than to let it spill out where Benji’s mates or the estate kids could hear.

At the table, Angus tucked into fried bread and sausages, the smell filling the cramped kitchen. Billy slid onto the bench, eyes down. Angel breezed in, still scribbling notes, rollers bobbing as she spoke.

“Mum, can I go see Jason after school?”

Betty raised her brows. “Jason, eh? Thought you had exams.”

“Only a bit,” Angel shrugged, hiding the smile in her book.

Angus grunted, eyes narrowing. “No boyfriends till you’ve got your results. Books first, boys later.”

Angel bit her tongue, though her cheeks burned. Billy peeked at her and gave the tiniest grin—he liked when Angel stood her ground.

Betty clattered plates down, her voice sharp but kind. “Angus, let the girl breathe. She’s not joinin’ a convent.”

The room filled with the noise of cutlery and chatter, the hum of the estate waking outside. Life at Number 23 wasn’t easy, but it was loud, strong, and stitched together with the kind of love that never had to be spoken out loud.

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Chapter 2

(Billy only been 11, like most of his age, didn't like school, he would look up to Benji, his 17 year old , expelled from school and working early mornings for the local milkman.)

Chapter Two

The bedroom always smelled of damp socks and the faint tang of hair gel Benji slapped on before work. Two single beds, shoved against opposite walls, left just enough space for a battered cassette player and a pile of clothes that never seemed to find the wash basket.

Billy sat hunched at the end of his bed, scribbling nothing into an old maths book. The door banged open and Benji stormed in, boots heavy on the floorboards.

"You've been at my tapes again," Benji barked, snatching up the cassette player.

"Listenin' to your boy bands, eh? Little puff."

Billy's head shot up, hood shadowing his face. "I haven't, you dick."

Benji narrowed his eyes, stepping closer. "What did you just call me?"

Billy swallowed. "N-nothing."

Benji's mouth twisted into a grin. "Careful, lad. You're goin' the right way for some Scotch."

Billy knew what that meant—Scotch mist, Dad's word for a fist. His chest tightened, but he stayed quiet. Benji ruffled his hair with a rough shove before throwing himself onto his own bed, laughing. It was love, in Benji's way, though Billy never quite knew how to take it.

At school that week, Billy hung back as the other kids piled out of music. Mr. Clarke, the new teacher with long hair tied back in a ponytail, leaned against the piano.

“Billy, stay behind a minute, would you?”

Billy froze. Teachers rarely spoke to him, unless it was to ask where his homework was.

“I’ve been listening,” Mr. Clarke said gently. “You’ve got a voice, son. A proper voice. Ever thought about joining the choir?”

Billy’s stomach flipped. Choir. Nothing less cool existed on the estate. “Dunno, sir. Not really my thing.”

Clarke tilted his head. “Think about it. Don’t waste a gift.”

Billy nodded, eyes fixed on the scuffed floor tiles. He wanted to sing—God, he wanted to—but he could already hear the lads at the bus stop if they found out.

Angel was the first to discover him. She barged into the boys’ room one evening, rifling through tapes, rollers bobbing in her hair.

“Where’s me Madonna tape, you pair of mugs?”

She yanked one out of Benji’s pile, unspooling it half by accident. Muttering, she stomped back to her room, shoved it into her player—only to hear a hiss of static, then the beat of the Top 40. And then—Billy’s voice. Clear, rich, strong, singing into the cheap microphone he’d nicked from Dad’s sound system.

Angel froze, hand hovering over the stop button. This wasn’t her shy little brother who lived under a hood. This was something else—something that made her throat tighten.

She slammed the door behind her, stormed back into the boys’ room, waving the cassette. “Billy! You bloody taped over my music!”

Billy went scarlet, tugging the hood lower. “Sorry. Didn’t mean—”

“Didn’t mean?” Angel cut him off, lowering her voice. “Why didn’t you tell me you could sing like that?”

Benji sat up, smirking. “Sing? Him? Don’t take the piss.”

But Angel ignored her older brother. She crouched in front of Billy, eyes blazing. “You’ve got somethin’, our kid. Proper somethin’. Don’t you dare hide it.”

Billy looked away, mumbling, “It’s nothing.” But inside, his chest swelled. Somebody had heard him.

That night, as Dad downed pints at the working men’s club and Mum pulled on her Saturday-night blouse for bar work, Billy lay awake. He hated school, hated the teachers who droned on, but in his head the crowd was screaming his name, lights flashing, music pounding. He didn’t want steel or shifts or Scotch mist. He wanted out.

And for the first time, he let himself imagine it—just for a minute—that maybe, somehow, his voice could take him further than the estate ever would.

Chapter Three

Saturday night in the three Hullets always carried a hum. Betty brushed her hair out in front of the cracked hallway mirror, rollers out, a splash of red lipstick brightening her tired face. She’d swapped her apron for a fitted blouse, the kind that made her stand straighter.

“You don’t need all that slap,” Angus muttered from the armchair, pint already poured from the fridge. “You’re only pullin’ pints.”

Betty rolled her eyes. “It’s called lookin’ presentable, Angus. Folk like their barmaid tidy, not lookin’ like she’s come straight out the chip shop.”

Angus grunted, but his gaze stayed fixed on her reflection. “You enjoy it too much, all them men starin’.”

“Don’t start,” she said firmly, grabbing her bag. “It’s money in the house, same as your factory.” She kissed the top of Billy’s hood as she passed. “You be good, love.”

Billy barely nodded, staring at the telly but not watching it.

At school that week, Mr. Clarke was relentless.

“Billy, you can’t keep wastin’ this,” he said after class, sheet music spread across the piano. “I’m not askin’ you to sing in front of your mates. Just try choir. See where it takes you.”

Billy shifted, trainers squeaking on the floor. “If people find out, I’m dead.”

“Talent’s worth risk,” Clarke said. “Think about it.”

Billy did think about it—every night. He’d hum under his breath when no one listened, imagine the stage lights instead of strip lights. But on the estate, boys didn’t sing. They fought, they played football, they worked. Anything else was trouble.

Angel had her own worries. Jason had been talking about applying to uni up north, studying law, making plans that didn’t have her in them.

“You’ll come with me, won’t you?” he asked one evening, walking her past the corner shop.

Angel snorted, chewing her gum. “What, leave me mum and Billy and this lot? Nah. I’m not built for that.”

Jason frowned. “You’re clever enough, Angel. You don’t have to end up here forever.”

She shoved his arm, play-fighting but hiding her sting. “This is me, Jason. This estate, this family. I’m not you.”

Still, when she went home and saw Billy scribbling lyrics into his maths book instead of homework, something inside her twisted. Maybe one of them could get out. Maybe her brother’s voice was bigger than these walls.

That night, in the boys’ bedroom, Benji flicked his lighter open and shut, restless. “Dad’s gonna go spare if Mum’s late again,” he muttered. “He don’t like her workin’ that bar.”

Billy kept his head down, humming into his pillow.

Benji smirked. “Oi, choirboy. You hummin’ Spice Girls under there?”

Billy’s face burned. He didn’t answer.

Benji chuckled, leaning back. “Don’t worry. Your secret’s safe. Long as you don’t tape over my songs again.” He tossed the lighter from hand to hand. “But one day, you’re gonna have to sing proper. Can’t hide forever, bro.”

Billy turned away, pulling the hood tight. He wished he could believe that.

Chapter Four

The row started the way it always did — Angus home late, the tang of ale on his breath, Betty already in her dressing gown, arms folded.

“You think I don’t know what folk say, you standin’ there all dolled up behind that bar?” Angus barked, slamming the door so hard the frame rattled.

Betty fired back, eyes blazing. “And you think your pints at the club don’t make folk talk? Least I’m bringin’ money in, Angus! Least I’m bloody useful!”

Their voices rose, filling the three-bed terrace, bouncing off wallpaper already peeling from damp. Angel rolled her eyes from her room, used to it by now. Benji stuffed his pillow over his head.

But Billy — Billy sat small in the corner of the boys’ bedroom, hood up as always, staring at his trainers. The shouts sank into his chest like stones. If I could just sing, if I could just make it... I could get out. I could escape this.

Later that week, music was his only breath of fresh air. The piano’s warm hum, Mr. Clarke’s voice, the echo in the classroom. Billy sat at the back, pretending not to care, but inside he liked it. Liked it more than anything.

As the class ended, Clarke’s voice cut through again.

“Billy — stay behind, please.”

A few heads turned. Billy’s stomach knotted. He’d been kept back last time too. They’d notice. He shuffled to the front, hood still shadowing his face.

Clarke leaned on the piano, smiling gently. “I’m going to ask you a favour.”

Billy blinked. “A favour? You’re the teacher.”

Clarke chuckled. “This Saturday, the school choir is performing at Westminster Church. Big event. Multiple choirs from across London. We’re short one more singer, and your voice—” he tapped the piano lid “—your voice could hold its own there. This could be the start of something for you.”

Billy’s face burned. “I dunno, sir... I mean—”

“Nothing but beneficial,” Clarke pressed. “If we organise it with your mum, will you do it?”

Billy rubbed the cuff of his hoodie between his fingers. “...Suppose so.”

“Right, great.” Clarke clapped his hands, already reaching for paper. “I’ll print the details for you to take home. Don’t let me down, okay?”

Billy turned to leave, awkward, head ducked. “Yeah.”

“And Billy?” Clarke called as he reached the door.

“Yes, sir?”

“More important — don’t let yourself down.”

Billy lowered his head further, hood almost covering his eyes. “Right.”

“And get that hood down!” Clarke barked suddenly, but not unkindly. Billy slipped out, heart racing.

Sure enough, Clarke kept his word. Midway through maths the next day, he strode in, handed Billy an envelope, and gave him a cheeky wink.

Billy stuffed it in his bag, ears hot as a couple of classmates sniggered. “Oh yeah, okay,” he muttered, trying to sound casual.

But inside, his nerves and excitement tangled together. Westminster. A proper church. A proper stage. Maybe... just maybe... this is the chance

Chapter Five

Billy sat on the edge of his bed that night, envelope still sealed in his pocket. He could hear Angus and Betty downstairs, their voices already raised again — arguments always sharper when the drink flowed. Benji sprawled across his own bed, flicking through tapes, humming along to Oasis.

“What’s that you got?” Benji asked suddenly, nodding at Billy’s pocket.

“Nothing.” Billy shoved it deeper.

“Don’t look like nothing.” Benji smirked. “You ain’t been writin’ love letters, have you?”

Billy kept quiet, praying his brother would drop it. But his fingers itched over the envelope. The words inside felt heavy, dangerous. Westminster Church. Choir. Saturday. If Benji knew, the whole estate would know by tea time.

Across the hall, Angel was curled on her bed, phone pressed between shoulder and ear. Jason’s voice buzzed down the crackly line.

“They’ve got open days next month. Manchester, Newcastle... I’ve even been lookin’ at Leeds, Angel. Imagine it — me, you, a proper place away from all this.”

Angel bit her lip. She could hear Billy’s muffled voice through the wall, Benji’s laugh, Mum’s clatter in the kitchen. Her life, loud and messy and close.

“Jay, I can’t just run off like that,” she said. “This is my home. My family. You don’t get it.”

Jason sighed. "I don't want to lose you, Angel. But I can't stay stuck."

She swallowed hard, forcing a laugh. "We'll figure it out. We always do." But when the line went dead, her chest felt tight, as if the estate walls had closed in another inch.

Later that night, Billy crept into the bathroom, letter unfolded in his lap. Westminster Church. Saturday, 10 a.m. Travel provided.

He traced the words with his finger. His heart thudded with both fear and hope. He could hear Dad downstairs roaring at the telly, Mum snapping back at him, Benji chucking a pillow at Angel for mouthing off.

Billy closed his eyes. For a moment, he pictured himself standing tall under cathedral arches, light pouring down, his voice carrying through a thousand ears. Not just the boy in the hood. Not just Angus's quiet lad. Someone else.

He folded the letter carefully, sliding it back into the envelope. Maybe he'd tell Mum. Maybe not. But one thing was certain — Saturday could change everything